

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 ACDA-05 IO-10 OMB-01 EUR-12

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P R 300850Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4731

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3801

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS, US

SUBJECT: SHIHABI ON PROSPECT OF NEGOTIATIONS

1. COS SHIHABI COMMENTED SEPTEMBER 29 THAT HE DID NOT KNOW IF PRESIDENT HAD YET REACHED DECISION WHETHER TO ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING GOLAN. SAID IN HIS OPINION FIRST QUESTION TO BE DECIDED WAS WHETHER SYRIA COULD EXPECT TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS OR WOULD MERELY BE COURTING CERTAIN HUMILIATION. IN HIS ESTIMATION THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS WERE DISTINCTLY UNFAVORABLE FOR SYRIA. HE SAW TWO MAIN FACTS: FIRST, ISRAEL HAD MADE AMPLY CLEAR THE RIGIDITY OF ITS POSITION CONCERNING GOLAN; SECOND, US ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL FLOWING FROM ACCORD HAD LEFT US LITTLE LEVERAGE OVER ISRAEL TO APPLY TO GOLAN TALKS.

2. REPLIED THAT WHILE I COULD UNDERSTAND DESIRE TO AVOID HUMILIATION, IT SEEMED ILLOGICAL TO ASSUME ONE COULD PROJECT RESULTS OF A NEGOTIATION WITHOUT DIRECTLY EXPLORING ITS PROSPECTS THROUGH ENGAGING. SHIHABI SAID THERE NO QUESTION SYRIA
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WOULD PREFER NEGOTIATIONS IF IT CONVINCED THEY WOULD

ACHIEVE PEACE. CONTINUED "BUT THIS MUST NOT BE JUST ANY
PEACE, NOT JUST THE PEACE WHICH ISRAEL WANTS." SUGGESTED
TO HIM THAT WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE ISRAELI INTEREST
IN PEACE WITH SYRIA, IF ONLY FOR REASON ISRAEL WISHED
PROTECT ACHIEVEMENTS GAINED IN SINAI ACCORD. HANDED
HIM COPY OF JULY 25 JERUSALEM POST ARTICLE BY VAN CREVELD
WHICH ARGUED AGAINST JUSTIFICATION OF OCCUPATION OF GOLAN
AND OTHER TERRITORIES IN NAME ISRAELI SECURITY. SAID WITH THIS
SORT OF FERMENT UNDERWAY IN ISRAEL, SYRIA SHOULD SEEK
INCREASE TREND BY PURSUING PATH OF NEGOTIATIONS. ASSURED HIM
WE WERE READY TO MAKE SERIOUS EFFORT ON BEHALF OF GOLAN
NEGOTIATIONS. ALL PARTIES SHOULD BE CONCERNED LEST SITUATION
BECAME FROZEN. WE NEVER INTENDED SINAI ACCORD AS LAST
STEP BUT RATHER AS FIRST OF SEVERAL WHICH ACHIEVEMENT OF
LASTING PEACE WOULD REQUIRE.
MURPHY

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